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## Faces in the Crowd

That You May Not Know . . .



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**ELIJAH PEPPER • Selah • Basketball • Senior**

Elijah Pepper is acknowledged as one of the greatest basketball talents the Yakima Valley has seen in several years. After missing most of the season because of knee surgery, his determination paid off as he returned with abandon the final five games of Selah's basketball season.

In the CWAC finale this past Tuesday, he scored 44 points, the second-highest total of his career.

He averaged 27.4 ppg and surpassed the 2,000 career scoring mark (2,034). Although Selah lost their bid at a fourth-straight league title, the Viking offense averaged nearly 80 ppg with his return. (They averaged 65 ppg previously.) Pepper is a UC-Davis college basketball signee and had to overcome a gruesome injury in which two front teeth were knocked loose in practice last week.

**OUMOU TOURE • Kamiakin • Basketball • Senior**

She is the highest-scoring (2,114 points) female athlete in Tri-Cities basketball history and will be heading to Butler University (Indiana) after graduation from Kamiakin this spring.

Oumou Touré put together a huge week for the Braves with 95 points, 47 rebounds, 15 steals, and four assists in three games versus Hanford, Richland, and Chiawana. She averaged nearly 32 points and 16 rebounds per contest with a season-high 39 in one contest.

Last year, she set Tondi von Oelhoffen's (then Redden) 33-year-old record during districts and her sisters, Khadidja and Sira, graduated from Kamiakin with their two-year degree at Columbi Basin College (Running Start) and played college ball. Oumou will follow in their footsteps.

**BRYAN STROM • Yakama Nation Tribal • Basketball • Junior**

Yakama Nation Tribal's boy's basketball program is among the best 1B schools in the state and recently beat Sunnyside Christian which doesn't happen very often.

One of the key players over the past three seasons has been Bryan Strom who was named as a WIAA Player of the Week. He is averaging 18.3 points, six assists, and five rebounds per game for the Eagles this winter. The highlight was a game-high of 33 points against Bickleton.

In Yakama's 71-58 victory over Trout Lake, he joined the elite 1,000 point club although he is just a junior and plays with a talented roster which includes his twin brother Bryce (averaging 17 ppg) and Mylo Jones.

**ALLISON UECKER • Naches • Basketball • Sophomore**

When tabulating wins and losses, the Naches girls have had a tough year. But, their team is extremely young featuring four freshmen and five sophomores and no juniors or seniors.

A bright spot has been the play of sophomore Allison Uecker, a 5-9 power forward who ranks among the top five scorers in the region which includes the Tri-Cities and Yakima areas. On the year, she is averaging nearly 23 ppg with a career-high of 38 points against Zillah and previously scored 34 against Goldendale.

Uecker is one of several multi-sport athletes for the Lady Rangers who you can see on the softball diamond this spring. Keep an eye on freshman Taylor Dunbar as well.

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